



## Fighting gas prices, U.S. to release 50 million barrels of oil

By JOSH BOAK and COLLEEN LONG

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Joe Biden on Tuesday ordered 50 million barrels of oil released from America's strategic reserve to help bring down energy costs, in coordination with other major energy consuming nations, including India, the United Kingdom and China.

The U.S. action is aimed at global energy markets, but also at helping Americans coping with higher inflation and rising prices ahead of Thanksgiving and winter holiday travel. Gasoline prices are at about \$3.40 a gallon, more than 50% higher than a year ago, according to the American Automobile Association.

The government will begin to move barrels into the market in mid- to late-December.



Storage tanks are shown at a refinery in Detroit, Tuesday, April 21, 2020.

Associated Press

Continued on next page

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**Continued from Front**

But the action is unlikely to immediately bring down gas prices significantly as families begin traveling for the holidays. Gasoline usually responds at a lag to changes in oil prices, and administration officials suggested this is one of several steps toward ultimately bringing down costs.

Oil prices had dropped in the days ahead of the announced withdrawals, a sign that investors were anticipating the moves that could bring a combined 70 million to 80 million barrels of oil onto global markets. But in Tuesday morning trading, prices shot up nearly 2% instead of falling. The market was expecting the news, and traders may have been underwhelmed when they saw the details, said Claudio Galimberti, senior vice president for oil markets at Rystad Energy. "The problem is that everybody knows that this measure is temporary," Galimberti said. "So once it is stopped, then if demand continues to be above supply like it is right now, then you're back to square one." Shortly after the U.S. announcement, India said it would release 5 million barrels from its strategic reserves. The British government confirmed it will release up to 1.5 million barrels from its stockpile. Japan and South Korea are also participating. U.S. officials say it's the biggest coordinated release from global strategic reserves. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman, Max Blain, said it was "a sensible and measured step to support global markets" during the pandemic recovery. Blain added that British companies will be authorized but not compelled to participate in the release. The actions by the U.S. and others also risk counter moves by Gulf nations, es-



**President Joe Biden speaks as he announces that he is nominating Jerome Powell for a second four-year term as Federal Reserve chair, during an event in the South Court Auditorium on the White House complex in Washington, Monday, Nov. 22, 2021.**

**Associated Press**

pecially Saudi Arabia, and by Russia. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have made clear they intend to control supply to keep prices high for the time being. As word spread in recent days of a coming joint release from U.S. and other countries' reserves, there were warnings from OPEC interests that those countries may respond in turn, reneging on promises to increase supplies in coming months.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso was among Republicans who criticized Biden's announcement. The No. 3 Senate Republican said the underlying issue is restrictions on domestic production by the Biden administration.

"Begging OPEC and Russia to increase production and now using the Strategic Petroleum Reserve are desperate attempts to address a Biden-caused disaster," Barrasso said. "They're not substitutes for American energy production."

Biden has scrambled to reshape much of his economic agenda around the issue of inflation, saying that his recently passed \$1 trillion infrastructure package will reduce price pressures by making it more efficient and cheaper to transport

goods.

Republican lawmakers have hammered the administration for inflation hitting a 31-year high in October. The consumer price index soared 6.2% from a year ago — the biggest 12-month jump since 1990. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky tore into the White House in a speech last week, saying the victims of higher prices were middle class Americans. The GOP argument is that the Biden \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package in March sent too much money into the economy, sending prices up and hurting middle-class and lower-income families. "The three biggest drivers of the staggering 6.2% inflation rate we logged last month were housing, transportation, and food," McConnell said. "Those aren't luxuries, they're essentials." The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is an emergency stockpile to preserve access to oil in case of natural disasters, national security issues and other events. Maintained by the Energy Department, the reserves are stored in caverns created in salt domes along the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coasts. There are roughly 605 million barrels of petro-

leum in the reserve.

"As we come out of an unprecedented global economic shutdown, oil supply has not kept up with demand, forcing working families and businesses to pay the price," Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said in a statement. "This action underscores the president's commitment to using the tools available to bring down costs for working families and to continue our economic recovery."

The Biden administration argues that the reserve is the right tool to help ease the supply problem. Americans used an average of 20.7 million barrels a day during September, according to the Energy Information Administration. That means that the release nearly equals about two-and-a-half days of additional supply.

The coronavirus pandemic roiled energy markets. As closures began in April, 2020, demand collapsed and oil futures prices turned negative. Energy traders did not want to get stuck with crude that they could not store. But as the economy recovered, prices jumped to a seven-year high in October.

U.S. production has not recovered. Energy Information Administration figures indicate that domestic production is averaging roughly 11 million barrels daily, down from 12.8 million before the pandemic started. Republicans have also seized on Biden's efforts to minimize drilling and support renewable energy as a reason for the decreased production, though there are multiple market dynamics at play as fossil fuel prices are higher around the world.

Biden and administration officials insist that tapping more oil from the reserve does not conflict with the president's long-term cli-

mate goals, because this short-term fix meets a specific problem, while climate policies are a long-term answer over decades.

They argue that the administration's push to boost renewable energy will eventually mean less dependence in the U.S. on fossil fuels. But that's a politically convenient argument — in simple terms, higher prices reduce usage, and significantly higher gasoline prices could force Americans into less reliance on fossil fuels.

"The only long term solution to rising gas prices is to continue our march to eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels and create a robust green energy economy," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said in support of the release.

The White House decision comes after weeks of diplomatic negotiations. Biden and President Xi Jinping of China talked over steps to counter tight petroleum supplies in their virtual meeting earlier this month and "discussed the importance of taking measures to address global energy supplies," according to the White House.

The Department of Energy will make the oil available from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in two ways; 32 million barrels will be released in the next few months and will return to the reserve in the years ahead, the White House said. Another 18 million barrels will be part of a sale of oil that Congress authorized.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Monday evening the White House would keep tabs on the oil companies and watch for price-gouging "when there's a supply of oil or the price of oil is coming down and the price of gas is not coming down." □



# President, VP and spouses to help food kitchen for holiday

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, were fixing to help a local food kitchen prepare Thanksgiving meals for the needy before leaving town — like millions of other Americans — to resume their family tradition of spending the holiday on tiny Nantucket island in Massachusetts.

Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff, were joining the outing to DC Central Kitchen, which serves cooked-from-scratch meals alongside training for culinary jobs.

Jill Biden kicked off the holiday season at the White House on Monday when she received the official White House Christmas tree — an 18 1/2-foot (5.6 meter) Fraser fir cut from a North Carolina farm that she declared "magnificent." The tree is destined for the Blue Room as the showstopper of Christmas at the White House — Biden's first as president.

The first lady also joined the president on a visit to the Army's Fort Bragg in North Carolina later Monday for an early Thanksgiving with service members and their families.

The Bidens were still dating when they first visited Nantucket, with Biden's sons, Beau and Hunter, in the mid-1970s. The couple was looking for a way out of the conundrum of choosing one of their families over the other to spend Thanksgiving with, the first lady wrote in her memoir.

Biden was a U.S. senator back then and his chief of staff suggested they go to Nantucket.

"And although neither Joe nor I had ever been, we decided that sounded as good as anywhere," she wrote. So they packed a cooler with sandwiches and sodas, loaded the boys into the station wagon and drove six hours to the Cape, where a ferry chugged them over to the island.

Thanksgiving on "Nantucket" — as their grand-



**President Joe Biden, first lady Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, and second gentleman Doug Emhoff, arrive to assemble Thanksgiving meal kits during a visit to DC Central Kitchen in Washington, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021.**

Associated Press

children call the island in a play on their "Nana" nickname for their grandmother — became the family tradition for the next several decades, though with a few exceptions, the first lady wrote.

Last fall, Biden put tradition on hold over COVID-19 concerns, when people were being told to avoid traveling and gathering indoors in large groups for the holidays. Instead, the then-president-elect hunkered down for Thanksgiving with just his wife, their daughter and her husband.

Both the president and first lady since have received the main two-dose course of the Pfizer vaccine, as well as the third booster shot recommended by public health officials to provide more enduring protection against the coronavirus.

Some Biden family members were at the White House this week. Hunter, his wife, Melissa, and their toddler son, Beau, watched Monday as the official Christmas tree was delivered. Hunter's daughter, Finnegan, later was seen on one of the balconies, holding brother Beau and watching as their grandparents departed for North Carolina.

The White House has not said how Biden, who turned 79 last Saturday, plans to

spend his time on Nantucket.

In her memoir, the first lady named a favorite restaurant where they would eat lunch and said they would gather on cobblestone Main Street on Friday evenings to see Santa Claus, watch the Christmas tree lighting ceremony and sing carols.

Biden also attends Catholic Mass every weekend.

Asked during her Tuesday briefing about the trip, White House press secretary Jen Psaki defended the president's decision to leave Washington for the holiday by saying that Thanksgiving "is a time to put politics aside, spend time with your loved ones and talk about what you're grateful for." □

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# Jury awards \$25M in damages for Unite the Right violence

By **DENISE LAVOIE**  
AP Legal Affairs Writer  
**CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP)**

— A jury ordered white nationalist leaders and organizations to pay more than \$25 million in damages Tuesday over violence that erupted during the deadly 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville.

After a nearly monthlong civil trial, the jury in U.S. District Court deadlocked on two key claims but found the white nationalists liable on four other counts in the lawsuit filed by nine people who suffered physical or emotional injuries during the two days of demonstrations.

Attorney Roberta Kaplan said the plaintiffs' lawyers plan to refile the suit so a new jury can decide the two claims this jury could not reach a verdict on. She called the amount of damages awarded from the others counts "eye opening."

"That sends a loud message," Kaplan said.

The verdict, though mixed, is a rebuke to the white nationalist movement, particularly for the two dozen individuals and organizations who were accused in a federal lawsuit of orchestrating violence against African Americans, Jews and others in a meticulously planned conspiracy.

White nationalist leader Richard Spencer vowed to appeal, saying the "entire theory of that verdict is fundamentally flawed."



**White nationalist demonstrators walk into the entrance of Lee Park surrounded by counter demonstrators in Charlottesville, Va., Saturday, Aug. 12, 2017.**

**Associated Press**

He said plaintiffs' attorneys made it clear before the trial that they wanted to use the case to bankrupt him and other defendants.

"It was activism by means of lawsuits, and that is absolutely outrageous," he said. "I'm doing fine right now because I had kind of accepted in my heart the worst that could happen. I had hope, of course, but I'm not terribly surprised or crestfallen."

Lawyers for the plaintiffs invoked a 150-year-old law passed after the Civil War to shield freed slaves from violence and protect their civil rights. Commonly known as the Ku Klux Klan Act, the law contains a rarely used provision that allows private citizens to sue other citizens for civil

rights violations.

Hundreds of white nationalists descended on Charlottesville for the Unite the Right rally on Aug. 11 and 12, 2017, ostensibly to protest city plans to remove a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. During a march on the University of Virginia campus, white nationalists chanted "Jews will not replace us," surrounded counterprotesters and threw tiki torches at them. The following day, an avowed admirer of Adolf Hitler rammed his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, killing one woman and injuring dozens more.

Then-President Donald Trump touched off a political firestorm when he failed to immediately denounce the white nationalists, say-

ing there were "very fine people on both sides."

The driver of the car, James Alex Fields Jr., is serving life in prison for murder and hate crimes. Fields is one of 24 defendants named in the lawsuit funded by Integrity First for America, a nonprofit civil rights organization formed in response to the violence in Charlottesville.

The lawsuit accused some of the country's most well-known white nationalists of plotting the violence, including Jason Kessler, the rally's main organizer; Spencer, who coined the term "alt-right" to describe a loosely connected band of white nationalists, neo-Nazis and others; and Christopher Cantwell, a white supremacist who became

known as the "crying Nazi" for posting a tearful video when a warrant was issued for his arrest on assault charges for using pepper spray against counter-demonstrators.

The trial featured emotional testimony from people struck by Fields' car or witnessed the attacks well as plaintiffs who were beaten or subjected to racist taunts.

Melissa Blair, who was pushed out of the way as Fields' car slammed into the crowd, described the horror of seeing her fiancé bleeding on the sidewalk and later learning that her friend, 32-year-old Heather Heyer, had been killed.

"I was confused. I was scared. I was worried about all the people that were there. It was a complete terror scene. It was blood everywhere. I was terrified," said Blair, who became tearful several times during her testimony.

During their testimony, some of the defendants used racial epithets and defiantly expressed their support for white supremacy. They also blamed one another and the anti-fascist political movement known as antifa for the violence that erupted that weekend. In closing arguments to the jury, the defendants and their lawyers tried to distance themselves from Fields and said the plaintiffs had not proved that they conspired to commit violence at the rally. □

## U.S. to require vaccines for all border crossers in January

By **ZEKE MILLER**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Joe Biden will require essential, nonresident travelers crossing U.S. land borders, such as truck drivers, government and emergency response officials, to be fully vaccinated beginning on Jan. 22, the administration planned to announce Tuesday.

A senior administration official said the requirement, which the White House previewed in October,

brings the rules for essential travelers in line with those that took effect earlier this month for leisure travelers, when the U.S. reopened its borders to fully vaccinated individuals.

Essential travelers entering by ferry will also be required to be fully vaccinated by the same date, the official said. The official spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to preview the announcement.

The rules pertain to non-

U.S. nationals. American citizens and permanent residents may still enter the U.S. regardless of their vaccination status, but face additional testing hurdles because officials believe they more easily contract and spread COVID-19 and in order to encourage them to get a shot.

The Biden administration pushed the requirement for essential travelers by more than two months from when it went into effect on Nov. 8 for non-es-

sential visitors to prevent disruptions, particularly among truck drivers who are vital to North American trade. While most cross-border traffic was shut down in the earliest days of the pandemic, essential travelers have been able to transit unimpeded.

The later deadline is beyond the point by which the Biden administration hopes to have large businesses require their employees to be vaccinated or tested weekly under an

emergency regulation issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. That rule is now delayed by litigation, but the White House has encouraged businesses to implement their own mandates regardless of the federal requirement with the aim of boosting vaccination. About 47 million adults in the U.S. remain unvaccinated, according to figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. □



# Bus crashes, catches fire in Bulgaria; at least 45 dead

By VESELIN TOSHKOV and  
STEPHEN McGRATH

**SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP)** — A bus carrying tourists back to North Macedonia crashed and caught fire in western Bulgaria early Tuesday, killing at least 45 people, including a dozen children, authorities said. DNA tests were being carried out to identify the victims.

The bus apparently ripped through a guardrail on a highway, though authorities said the cause was still under investigation. Photos taken shortly after the crash showed the vehicle engulfed in flames as plumes of thick, black smoke rose. Daylight revealed a burned-out shell with all of its windows blown out, sitting in the median. A portion of the guardrail was lying in the road.

Seven survivors were hospitalized after the crash, which took place as a group of buses was returning from a trip to Turkey. Twelve children were among the dead, according to the North Macedonia chief prosecutor, Ljubomir Joveski.

Bulgarian Interior Minister Boyko Rashkov told report-



Firefighters and forensic workers inspect the scene of a bus crash which, according to authorities, killed at least 45 people on a highway near the village of Bosnek, western Bulgaria, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021.

ers at the crash site that he had "never in my life seen something more horrifying" and that the identification process would take time.

"The people who were on the bus are turned to charcoal," Rashkov said. "There were four buses that traveled together, and it is possible that passengers changed buses during the stops."

Borislav Sarafov, chief of Bulgaria's national investigation service, confirmed that 52 people were on the bus that crashed.

Among the survivors were five North Macedonia citizens, one Serb and one Belgian, according to North Macedonia's Foreign Ministry. Albanian Foreign Minister Olta Xhacka said almost all of the dead were ethnic

Albanians, but it was not clear if they were also citizens of North Macedonia. Blagoj Bocvarski, North Macedonia's transport minister, told reporters in the capital of Skopje late Tuesday that officials have started a procedure to revoke the transportation license of the travel company that owns the bus. He said the company has

four buses licensed to carry passengers internationally, but for the bus involved in the accident "there was no record in the ministry that it possessed the license."

News of the crash hit hard in the small Balkan country of 2 million people. The North Macedonia government observed a minute of silence Tuesday and declared three days of mourning. Flags will be lowered to half-staff, and all public events will be canceled. The country's prime minister traveled to Bulgaria, as did its chief prosecutor, who visited the crash site.

Azem Sadiki, mayor of Studenecani municipality near Skopje told reporters that 20 of the crash victims were local residents. He said the dead included a mother and her four children as well as the woman's sister and her two children.

"We are very sad. This is a huge loss for us all, and the whole country," Sadiki said. Outside the government building in Skopje, Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani told The Associated Press that authorities are "trying their best to identify the victims as soon as possible." □

Associated Press

# ICC: Philippines wants 'war on drugs' probe to be deferred

By MIKE CORDER

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)** — The Philippines has asked the International Criminal Court to defer its crimes against humanity investigation linked to the country's deadly "war on drugs," the court's chief prosecutor announced Tuesday.

The request will delay and could even halt altogether the ICC probe into the deadly crackdown. The Philippines argues in a letter to ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan dated Nov. 10 that it already is investigating the crimes and so the international court doesn't have jurisdiction.

"The court may only exercise jurisdiction where national legal systems fail to do so, which is certainly not the case in the Philippines," the letter said, citing domestic investigations.

Khan said that while his investigation, authorized by the court's judges just over two months ago, must now be temporarily suspended, his office "will continue its analysis of information already in its possession and any new information it may receive from third parties."

The ICC is a court of last resort for cases that countries are unwilling or unable to prosecute. Under the court's rules, a country can request deferral of an investigation if it is already investigating the crimes.

Khan said in a statement that the nations seeking a deferral need to provide evidence of "concrete and progressive investigative steps" against suspects or alleged acts that fall under the ICC investigation.

He said that he would ask the Philippines "to provide substantiating information

regarding the investigations and proceedings" it mentions in its request seeking deferral.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has defended the crackdown as "lawfully directed against drug lords and pushers who have for many years destroyed the present generation, specially the youth."

More than 6,000 mostly poor drug suspects have been killed, according to government pronouncements, but human rights groups say the death toll is considerably higher and should include many unsolved killings by motorcycle-riding gunmen who may have been deployed by police.

Duterte has denied condoning extrajudicial killings of drug suspects although he has openly threatened suspects with death and



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures as he addresses land reform beneficiaries on the 31st year of the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in suburban Quezon city northeast of Manila, Philippines, Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2019.

Associated Press

has ordered police to shoot suspects who dangerously resist arrest.

Judges in September said there was a "reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation" into killings

committed throughout the Philippines as part of the war on drugs, saying they appear to amount to a crime against humanity under the court's founding statute. □



# Russia, China sign roadmap for closer military cooperation

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Russia's defense chief on Tuesday signed a roadmap for closer military ties with China, pointing to increasingly frequent U.S. strategic bomber flights near both countries' borders.

During a video call, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe "expressed a shared interest in stepping up strategic military exercises and joint patrols by Russia and China," according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

"China and Russia have been strategic partners for many years," Shoigu said. "Today, in conditions of increasing geopolitical turbulence and growing conflict potential in various parts of the world, the development of our interaction is especially relevant." Shoigu pointed to increasingly intensive flights by the U.S. strategic bombers near Russian borders, saying that there were 30 such missions over the past month alone.



In this photo released by the Russian Defense Ministry Press Service, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu shows his signature under a roadmap for military cooperation between Russia and China during a video call with Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

"This month, during the U.S. Global Thunder strategic force exercise, 10 strategic bombers practiced the scenario of using nuclear

weapons against Russia practically simultaneously from the western and eastern directions," Shoigu said, adding that they came as

close as 20 kilometers (12 miles) to the Russian border. He also noted a rise in the number of U.S. bomber flights over the Sea of Ok-

hotsk where they practiced reaching the points for launching cruise missiles, saying that it poses a threat to both Russia and China.

"In such an environment, the Russian-Chinese coordination becomes a stabilizing factor in global affairs," Shoigu said.

Wei praised Russia for successfully countering what he described as U.S. pressure and military threats.

Shoigu and Wei hailed a series of maneuvers that involved Russian and Chinese warplanes and naval ships, and signed a plan for military cooperation for 2021-2025.

On Friday, two Russian Tu-95MS strategic bombers and two Chinese H-6K strategic bombers flew a joint patrol over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea, prompting South Korea to scramble fighter jets. The bomber patrol followed joint naval maneuvers by Russian and Chinese warships and aircraft in the Sea of Japan last month. □

# ICC: Philippines wants 'war on drugs' probe to be deferred

By **MIKE CORDER**  
Associated Press

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)** — The Philippines has asked the International Criminal Court to defer its crimes against humanity investigation linked to the country's deadly "war on drugs," the court's chief prosecutor announced Tuesday. The request will delay and could even halt altogether the ICC probe into the deadly crackdown.

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## West Africa has highest numbers of child soldiers, says U.N.

**SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)** — A Chilean court on Tuesday increased the prison sentence for six former soldiers convicted in one of the most notorious killings by the former military dictatorship — the kidnapping, torture and murder of folk singer Víctor Jara— as well as that of a government official.

The Court of Appeals said the six should spend 25 years in prison rather than the 18-year sentence imposed when they were convicted in 2018. A seventh veteran had his sentence increased to eight years from five.

Jara, a highly popular singer and university professor, was a fervent supporter of Marxist President Salvador Allende and he was seized only hours after Gen. Augusto Pinochet assaulted the presidential palace and overthrew Allende on Sept. 11, 1973.

Jara was taken to what was then the national stadium along with thousands of other prisoners. His hands and head were beaten and he was shot with at least 44 bullets as a warning to those who might challenge Pinochet's authority.



**Adama Drabo, 16, who was arrested on suspicion of working for Islamic militant group MUJAO, sits in the police station in Sevare, some 620 kilometers (385 miles) north of Mali's capital Bamako Friday, Jan. 25, 2013.**

Associated Press

The case also involved Allende's prisons chief Littré Quiroga, who also was tortured and killed at the stadium, apparently because of alleged mistreatment of an officer who had earlier attempted a coup.

The appeals court said the original judges had mistakenly classified the crimes as less serious than they were. It said the treatment of the victims was "demonstrative of the mindlessness and

visceral hatred" aroused against them.

"This ruling is important as well because it now definitively overcomes the impunity that was shown toward these crimes for so many years," said Nelson Cauco, attorney for Jara's family.

The court said that while under arrest, Jara was seen "visibly deteriorated, physically and mentally, with his face swollen with innumerable

bruises, hands bloodied and deformed, the fin-

gers evidently were broken or fractured."

In all, the judges said, Jara had 56 bone fractures in addition to the 44 bullet wounds. Quiroga had been shot 23 times.

The bodies of the two men were dumped on a dusty street near the Metropolitan Cemetery and were later taken to the morgue, where someone recognized Jara and secretly informed his wife, the British dancer Joan Turner Jara. The family managed to have his body exhumed for an autopsy in 2009.

Official investigations count more than 3,000 people killed by the 17-year-military regime,

The stadium where Jara was killed has since been renamed in his honor. □

## West Africa has highest numbers of child soldiers, says U.N.

**By SAM MEDNICK  
OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)** — Trapped in conflicts, the children of West and Central Africa are the most recruited by armed groups in the world and also have the highest number of victims of sexual violence, says a report released Tuesday by the United Nations Children's Fund. For five years the region has seen increased conflicts in which more than 21,000 children have been

recruited by government forces and armed groups, says the report. In addition, more than 2,200 children in the region have been victims of sexual violence since 2016, says the report. More than 3,500 children have been abducted, making it the region with the second-highest abductions in the world, said the report.

"The numbers and trends are extremely worrying for current and future gen-

erations of children," Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF's regional director for West and Central Africa told The Associated Press.

"Not only have grave violations against children perpetrated by parties to the conflicts not stopped across West and Central Africa, but we have even seen a spike over the past five years, with a 50% increase in the total number of verified grave violations," she said. □



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# Thanksgiving

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## The gift that always gives The Koegel family makes generous donation of books to Aruba

**ORANJESTAD —** We at Aruba Today love sharing all kinds of happy news with our readers especially when it comes to the generosity of our loving guests. Many visitors not only come to our island for the sun, food and happy times but many of them also bring things for our children in need. This is the case of a lovely family from New Jersey.

Jennifer Koegel is a social worker who first came to Aruba in the mid-nineties with friends and later on returned in 2006. Fifteen years later she continues to visit her beloved island. She even bought a timeshare and has been traveling together with her parents and children. Her daughter Jessica was only 2 months old when she first came to Aruba.

Over the last five years, Koegel has been collecting school supplies for the children. Her daughter Jessica has also been involved in the projects and helps her mother shop and organize the donations. They raised over \$1300 and collected items for the orphanage 'Kinderhuis Imeldahoff' in Noord and the Home School in Paradera, a school for children with special needs. The school was able to purchase new chairs for the students and teachers, as well as tables to accommodate new enrollment for the school year. Last year Jessica was able to gather school supplies by the Girl Scout troop 490 from Long Island and also Jessica's Girls Scout troop 97130 from Wood-Ridge, New Jersey,



sey, which donated many items such as Barbie's and personal hygiene supplies. Tourists from all over the U.S. contribute to this cause by bringing items in their own luggage and afterwards taken to drop-off locations. The Koegel family is beyond grateful to each and every one who has helped and supported them throughout the years.

This year they received a special request from Filomena College Mavo Highschool in San Nicolas. The school was busy raising awareness in children from a young age that reading can be fun and adventurous. The school celebrated their 75th anniversary and were gifted 75 books from Koegel and friends.

### Here's a feedback sent to Koegel from a teacher at Filomena College:

"I was excited. It felt like that moment when the goodies you ordered on Amazon, have finally arrived. What a coincidence that the books arrived in the week Aruba celebrates, I guess I can call it 'Book Appreciation Week'. By the way, I am Cyria and I teach English to the second, third and fourth year students at Filomena College Mavo. This is a special year for our school as we are celebrating our 75th year of existence all throughout this school year. The slogan of our school is: Filomena ta AML, ta Abo ta Nos. Loosely translated: Filomena, is Me, is You, it's Us. It was about 2 months ago that we were contacted with the news of this project. Naturally I jumped at the offer. To make a long story short, within less than two months the books



that I asked for are now IN my classroom. On behalf of the 4th year students, the Principal Raquel Lampe and the rest of the Filomena staff, we would like You and the Precious tourists to receive our heartfelt thanks for this wonderful donation."

I went back to my classroom where I briefly informed the 4th year students of what had just transpired. Now, I had their attention. "So which books did we get?", one asked. All eyes were on me, as I started mentioning a few titles. The "oohs" and "ahhs" uttered by my enthusiastic students made me smile. However, soon after I wished I could just put them on "MUTE" because I was bombarded with questions all at the same time about what other titles we had received and if they could have it to read etc.. They wanted to make sure they secured their copy before someone else did. I was happy to inform them that they need not worry because there were enough copies of the various titles. Today, one class struck a pose with their books in hand.

Thank you Jennifer and our dear tourists for putting your LOVE for Aruba and the Aru-

ban youth in action in such a powerful way. You are very special to us."

I want to extend again thanks to M Charlotte Wolff-Croes and Erick Wolff who have been instrumental in this historical project. Without them and all the wonderful support from people traveling to Aruba with books, this project would not be possible. We have made tremendous progress in a little bit of time, however we have a long way to go.

Koegel is also collecting books for Maria College, Juliana College, San Antonio College and Abraham de Veer School.

If you want to contribute to this great cause contact Jennifer at her U.S. number 201-704-5415

On behalf of Aruba Today, we would like to thank the Koegel family and friends for this wonderful gesture. Just like them, we know there are many visitors who also do this and we truly appreciate each and every act of kindness towards our residents, especially our children in need. Thank you! ☐



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## The Kitchen Table enters seventh year of gastronomy with raving reviews: “The devil is in the details; we are in praise.”

EAGLE BEACH — While in Aruba do yourself a favor and experience a night at The Kitchen Table. This is an elegant, classy, intimate, high-quality restaurant with an exceptional dining set-up. Dining here is an experience, a kind of sitting- at your- best- friend's or family's kitchen table where you feel and taste that the food contains love. The extra mile the owners and staff go has everything to do with running this lovely restaurant in a sincere, authentic way. In Spanish they say: 'Mi casa es tu casa' meaning my house is your house and that describes exactly what you will feel during a night at The Kitchen Table.

The 8-course ecstatic food trip starts with a warm welcome and sparkling wine at the patio of The Kitchen Table's new location at Paradise Beach Villas as of 6.00PM. The chef's table concept is happening on the second floor of the owners 'restaurant Asi Es Mi Peru, another highly recommended establishment. But we are here now to guide you through the concept of The Kitchen Table, so let's go.

Taking you upstairs is literally taking you into an ambiance of warmth, coziness, classic elegance, and intimacy. You are treated like queen and king while sitting in noble chairs at a huge table. Owners Roxanna Salinas and Jan van Nes are warm and welcoming hosts and Chef David Lizano and Sous-Chef Xalsky Schwengle enthusiastically share their deep knowledge of the beautiful dishes that will be presented to you. Get ready to dive into the tastebuds tickling journey to the Caribbean, Peruvian and international cuisine. To pair the perfect wines three sommeliers were invited to make the selection.

### Table full foodies



The restaurant just got its new menu out, so this is the time to reserve your spot at the table. A Caribbean Peruvian Snack Trio is the enchanting first appetizer existing of a Chicken Empanada, Crab & Shrimp Eggroll and a Cucumber & Tuna Nikkei. This is paired with a delicate Ruffino Oviato (Italy), just perfect. Taking us to the next round we are presented a Mahi Mahi Tartare, delicious and combined with the Spanish Santiago Ruiz Albarino, we are in heaven. What follows is a personal favorite, the Beef Tataki with Quinoa accompanied by La Fage, Miraflores Rose wine from France. This is an amazing dish. In between the courses the owner and chef explain about the ingredients, preparation, and origins of the dishes in turns, it is truly an interesting and exciting presentation. The Peruvian Red Snapper Casserole is a surprising, wonderful tasting and in complete balance with the USA Cline Viognier from Sonoma Coast. My American-Ecuadorian neighbor was thrilled with this dish and who would be a better judge than she, after all she is from the region. The guests are clearly having a good time and we are in awe so far. The Kitchen Table builds this evening in an upward trend, and we proceed with Scallops and Shrimps within a Risotto of green Peas Puree with a foam of Coconut Milk Sauce. A mouth-melting experience and added to the culinary joy is a USA wine from Yolo County, Phantom Chardonnay. From the Caribbean, Peru we travel to Argentina presented to us with a Veal in her Jus and paired with a beautiful Lunta Malbec. There is no great dinner without a sweet goodbye and The Kitchen Table makes sure that you will not forget them by signing off with a fantastic dessert: Mango popsicle and a Three-layered Cheesecake together with a



Portuguese Osborne Port. We asked a couple from New York how they liked the experience: "The devil is in the details; every tiny part here is balanced, and savors are matched in an unmatched way. We are in praise."

### The secret formula

The Peruvian-born Roxanna Salinas and her husband Jan van Nes are the secret formula behind The Kitchen Table's success. You can tell making the customers happy is their main priority. The couple takes a personal approach to what they do, this is not about running a business as usual. This is more about making you feel welcomed home, as well as being pampered. They bring top hospitality, experience and authenticity to the table. Within this gourmet dinner concept the two blended the Peruvian culinary art of Roxanna's top kitchen team and Jan's expertise from The Kitchen Table. The result is one big trip of delight, indulge and tickling of your taste buds. The Kitchen Table welcomes you with open arms every Tuesday to Saturday. An evening at The Kitchen Table will be noted as unforgettable in your book of vacation memories, as it stands out from the regular island dinners.

The Kitchen Table is open from Tuesday to Saturday. Have a peak on their website [www.thekitchentableinaruba.com](http://www.thekitchentableinaruba.com) or call them at +297-280 7117. □

The kitchen table





## Nayla Geerman is the New Sales Manager at the Hilton

**PALM BEACH – Hilton Aruba is thrilled to announce the promotion of Nayla Geerman to Sales Manager. Nayla began her career at the resort as an intern in the Sales & Marketing department, assisting the Weddings & Catering team. In March 2019, Nayla joined the team full time as the Events Coordinator.**

Nayla explains she was destined to work at the resort, where she started her career during her university years, and assisted in the Sales and Marketing department. She must have left an excellent impression because she was later called back to help the Department of Human Resources.

Sales and Marketing, knocked on her door again in August 2018, and Nayla was eventually asked to stay on as Events Coordinator, on a temporary basis.

She became a full time Team Member on March 8, 2019, and having proved herself on all fronts was just promoted to Sales Manager.



## The Aruba Tourism Authority honor loyal visitors on the island

**PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor one of Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as a Distinguished Visitor of Aruba. The Distinguished visitor certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 10 years and more consecutively.**



The honoree was **Mrs. Miriam Rodenstein** from Argentina!

Rodenstein stated that she loves the island very much, especially for its

year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, its safety, the staff at the Marriott Aruba Ocean Club, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom have become like family to them.

Richardson together with

the representatives of the Marriott Aruba Ocean Club presented the certificate to the honoree, handed over some presents and also thanked her for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination and as her home-away-from-home. □

er, effective October 1st, 2021.

fully in July 2020 and the first wedding unfolded that month.

In her capacity as Event Coordinator she worked hand in hand with legendary Bridal Specialist Lisa Dammerman, and together they landed the WeddingWire Couples' Choice Awards®, an accolade earned annually by top wedding professionals.

During the 2020 pandemic, and subsequent lock down, Nayla continued her work, rebooking all 2020 postponed events, including wedding, accommodating all special requests. The resort opened success-

For 2022 and 2023, the resort already has many weddings and events booked, and Nayla reports that Sales in general, is one of her strengths, and all indications point at exciting two next years.

A graduate of the University of Aruba, Nayla spent almost 10 years working in the Netherlands. She has one daughter, 8, her pride and joy, and she is looking forward to organizing her First Communion event. Wedding? No, not so fast. □

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# Target to keep stores closed on Thanksgiving for good

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Target will no longer open its stores on Thanksgiving Day, making permanent a shift to the unofficial start of the holiday season that was suspended during the pandemic.

To limit crowds in stores, retailers last year were forced to turn what had become a weekend shopping blitz into an extended event, with big holiday discounts beginning as early as October.

That forced shift appears to have been fortuitous.

U.S. holiday sales last November and December rose 8.2% in 2020 from the previous year, according to The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group. The trade group predicts 2021 could shatter that record, growing between 8.5% and 10.5%.

Americans, able to get the same offers over a broader timespan and relieved from some of the stresses that go hand in hand with the holidays, appeared to embrace the change, which has also resonated with workers, Target said.

"What started as a temporary measure driven by the pandemic is now our new

standard — one that recognizes our ability to deliver on our guests' holiday wishes both within and well beyond store hours," Target CEO Brian Cornell wrote in a note to employees. "You don't have to wonder whether this is the last Thanksgiving you'll spend with family and friends for a while, because Thanksgiving store hours are one thing we won't 'get back to' when the pandemic finally subsides."

Target is the first major retailer to make such a permanent move during the pandemic, and its decision could push other retailers to follow in its path, says Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics, a retail research firm. He believes retailers are also looking at whether it's worth spending money on labor and other costs to open on Thanksgiving when shoppers are turning more to online shopping and away from physical stores.

"With all these online shopping opportunities, is it really necessary to open on Thanksgiving?" Perkins said. Macy's, which will not open its stores on Thanksgiving for the second year in a row, said that its curbside pickup service will be available at



A Target store is shown in Philadelphia on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021.

Associated Press

select locations. It also noted that it hasn't announced future plans but "we lean into what our customers as well as colleagues tell us is important to them on these decisions."

Kohl's and Walmart will also be closed on Thursday, but Walmart said it hasn't made a decision yet on the future of Thanksgiving Day store shopping; Kohl's declined to comment.

Target said that distribution and call centers will have some staff on Thanksgiving, and they will collect holiday pay.

The holiday shopping season started to creep into Thanksgiving Day 20 years ago when retailers began kicking off sales into the

week hours of the morning on Black Friday. Ten years later, Target and other major stores opened their doors on the holiday itself, creating a new shopping tradition.

Many did so to compete with Amazon and other rising online threats. At its peak five years ago, about 25 chain stores ushered in crowds at its physical stores on Thanksgiving, according to Julie Ramhold, consumer analyst with DealNews.com.

But the shift seemed to merely cannibalize Black Friday sale, with big crowds showing up for door buster deals on Thanksgiving. The shopping event was diluted further when stores be-

gan marketing Black Friday deals for the entire holiday week and then later for the entire month of November. Big retailers suffered blowback from critics who said thousands of people were forced to work rather than being with family during the holiday. Crowds started to also diminish for Thanksgiving Day in recent years, too, and the number of retail chains and malls, including Mall of America in Minnesota, stopped the practice. That whittled the number of stores open on the holiday down to well under 20 major chains, excluding pharmacies and grocers that remain open for a least for a few hours. Some, like Costco and Nordstrom, never opened their doors during the holiday, saying they wanted to respect the holiday.

Thanksgiving had historically not been a big sales day; it never makes it into the top 10 because stores usually opened their doors around 5 p.m.

However, it's been a big online shopping day. For the past two years, the holiday trailed only Cyber Monday and Black Friday in online sales, according to the Adobe Digital Economy Index. □

# U.S. sues to halt sugar merger, says it would harm competition

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Justice Department filed a lawsuit on Tuesday seeking to block a major U.S. sugar manufacturer from acquiring its rival, arguing that allowing the deal would harm competition and consumers.

The suit was filed in federal court in Delaware. It comes about eight months after U.S. Sugar announced it reached an agreement to acquire the Imperial Sugar Company, one of the largest sugar refiners in the nation.

The lawsuit is the latest example of the Justice Department's approach to aggressive enforcement of federal antitrust law that officials say is aimed at ensuring a fair and competitive market. It comes months

after President Joe Biden signed an executive order that called on the Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission to vigorously enforce antitrust statutes and promote market competition.

"Robust antitrust enforcement is an essential pillar of the Justice Department's commitment to ensuring economic opportunity and fairness for all," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement. "We will not hesitate to challenge anticompetitive mergers that would harm American consumers and businesses alike."

U.S. Sugar said it plans to fight the lawsuit. It argued that the acquisition will increase production and distribution of refined sugar

and provide a more secure supply.

"This transaction will improve supply chain logistics and will not result in higher prices or any harm to customers and consumers," the company said in a statement. "We look forward to making our case in court."

The Justice Department disagreed. It says the proposed acquisition would "further consolidate an already concentrated market for refined sugar." It would cut down on competition, leaving only the new consolidated company and one other major sugar company selling a significant share of refined sugar in the southeastern U.S., the Justice Department contends.



Attorney General Merrick Garland speaks during a Tribal Nations Summit during Native American Heritage Month, in the South Court Auditorium on the White House campus, Nov. 15, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

The Justice Department says U.S. Sugar, which operates a large refinery in Florida, sells all of its sugar through a marketing cooperative known as the

United Sugars Corporation. Imperial Sugar operates a refinery in Savannah, Georgia and a sugar transfer and liquidation facility in Ludlow, Kentucky. □



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 46 Like

1 Tough ranked  
puzzles players

7 Really  
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11 Zoo

resident

12 Spiced tea

13 Catch

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14 Bike part

15 Very

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17 Cutting

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20 Provinces

23 "That's

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24 Skilled

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26 Moo goo

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27 Verb for

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28 Do the

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29 Not nude

31 — loss

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32 Sailing

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34 Hudson

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37 Perfect

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39 Practical

43 Authentic

44 Know by

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45 Lawyer:

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Yesterday's answer

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off	40 Future
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30 "I wish!"	sched.
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11-24

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

FERRARRAT EV Q PQWUV CQKA.

MA RLAGT FZU KWIA R

RAQUHYWGO PFU Q SQOWH

TFEU QGT Q KERC XWGOTES FP

LAQHA. — AZOAGA F'GAWKK

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE BIRD OF PARADISE ALIGHTS ONLY UPON THE HAND THAT DOES NOT GRASP. — JOHN BERRY

## How COVID shots for kids help prevent dangerous new variants



Cadell Walker comforts her daughter Solome, 9, as nurse Cindy Haskins administers a Pfizer COVID-19 shot at a vaccination clinic for young students at Ramsey Middle School on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021 in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

By LAURA UNGAR

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Cadell Walker rushed to get her 9-year-old daughter Solome vaccinated against COVID-19 — not just to protect her but to help stop the coronavirus from spreading and spawning even more dangerous variants.

"Love thy neighbor is something that we really do believe, and we want to be good community members and want to model that thinking for our daughter," said the 40-year-old Louisville mom, who recently took Solome to a local middle school for her shot. "The only way to really beat COVID is for all of us collectively to work together for the greater good."

Scientists agree. Each infection — whether in an adult in Yemen or a kid in Kentucky — gives the virus another opportunity to mutate. Protecting a new, large chunk of the population anywhere in the world limits those opportunities. That effort got a lift with 28 million U.S. kids 5 to 11 years old now eligible for child-sized doses of the

Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Moves elsewhere, like Austria's recent decision to require all adults to be vaccinated and even the U.S. authorizing booster shots for all adults on Friday, help by further reducing the chances of new infection. Vaccinating kids also means reducing silent spread, since most have no or mild symptoms when they contract the virus. When the virus spreads unseen, scientists say, it also goes unabated. And as more people contract it, the odds of new variants rise.

David O'Connor, a virology expert at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, likens infections to "lottery tickets that we're giving the virus." The jackpot? A variant even more dangerous than the contagious delta currently circulating.

"The fewer people who are infected, the less lottery tickets it has and the better off we're all going to be in terms of generating the variants," he said, adding that variants are even more likely to emerge in

people with weakened immune systems who harbor the virus for a long time.

Researchers disagree on how much kids have influenced the course of the pandemic. Early research suggested they didn't contribute much to viral spread. But some experts say children played a significant role this year spreading contagious variants such as alpha and delta.

Getting kids vaccinated could make a real difference going forward, according to estimates by the COVID-19 Scenario Modeling Hub, a collection of university and medical research organizations that consolidates models of how the pandemic may unfold. The hub's latest estimates show that for this November through March 12, 2022, vaccinating 5- to 11-year-olds would avert about 430,000 COVID cases in the overall U.S. population if no new variant arose. If a variant 50% more transmissible than delta showed up in late fall, 860,000 cases would be averted, "a big impact," said project co-leader Katriona Shea, of Pennsylvania State University.

Delta remains dominant for now, accounting for more than 99% of analyzed coronavirus specimens in the United States. Scientists aren't sure exactly why. Dr. Stuart Campbell Ray, an infectious disease expert at Johns Hopkins University, said it may be intrinsically more infectious, or it may be evading at least in part the protection people get from vaccines or having been infected before.

"It's probably a combination of those things," he said. "But there's also very good and growing evidence that delta is simply more fit, meaning that it's able to grow to higher levels faster than other variants that are studied. So when people get delta, they become infectious sooner."

Ray said delta is "a big family" of viruses, and the world is now swimming in a sort of "delta soup." □

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## Apple says it is suing Israeli hacker-for-hire company

**RICHMOND, Va. (AP)** — Tech giant Apple announced Tuesday it is suing Israel's NSO Group, seeking to block the world's most infamous hacker-for-hire company from breaking into Apple's products, like the iPhone.  
Apple said in a complaint filed in federal court in California that NSO Group employees are "amoral 21st century mercenaries who have created highly sophisticated cyber-surveillance machinery that invites routine and flagrant abuse." Apple said NSO Group's spyware, called Pegasus, had been used to attack a small number of Apple customers worldwide. □

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# Review: 'House of Gucci' is pure, unapologetic decadence

By **LINDSEY BAHR**

**AP Film Writer**

Everything in "House of Gucci" is over the top. The accents. The performances. The fashion. The settings. The runtime. The music. The greed. This movie knows exactly what it is and, sweetie, it is gloriously decadent, ridiculous fun.

There is an alternate universe in which "House of Gucci" is a subtle Italian-language film. Perhaps it's a more straightforward tragedy. Maybe it's even a limited series taking the viewer back to the origins of the Italian luxury label, in 1921. But director Ridley Scott, and screenwriters Becky Johnston and Roberto Bentivegna, have chosen the route of operatic artificiality. You don't cast Jared Leto as clownish Fredo-type and have him act against a father played by Al Pacino by accident. Big is the point.

Based on a book by Sara Gay Forden, "House of Gucci" is about the dissolution of the Gucci dynasty. Their reign over the eponymous leather goods and fashion house lasted only three generations. But as any new money family knows, by the time the third generation takes over, usually no one is left to remember a time when there wasn't extraordinary wealth and privilege.

And this is where we pick up with the Gucci family, with the business being run



This image released by MGM shows Lady Gaga as Patrizia Reggiani in "House of Gucci."

**Associated Press**

by founder Guccio Gucci's sons Rodolfo (Jeremy Irons) and Aldo (Pacino). Scott's film glosses over the other second-generation siblings in part to streamline an already sprawling story but mostly to hammer in the father-son themes. Aldo's son is Paolo (Leto), a fool with delusions of grandeur and little talent to back it up. Rodolfo's son is Maurizio (Adam Driver) who is smart but would rather study law than join in the family business.

Our entry to this world, however, is an outsider: Patrizia Reggiani (Lady Gaga), a local bombshell and party girl who meets

Maurizio by chance. Her eyes light up with manic purpose when she hears his last name is Gucci and she makes it her mission to become part of his life. This might sound sinister, especially if you know where it all ends up, but it's actually quite charming at first. The beginning of their odyssey plays like a breezy romantic comedy, with Patrizia as the gentle hunter of Driver's soft-spoken and bashful prey. Both are happy and in love and they stay together even after Rodolfo cuts his son off for choosing to marry someone beneath his station. And it's true, Patrizia might not have much

in the way of education or culture and mistake Klimt for Picasso, but she a way with people too and, we'll come to find out, is a natural Machiavelli.

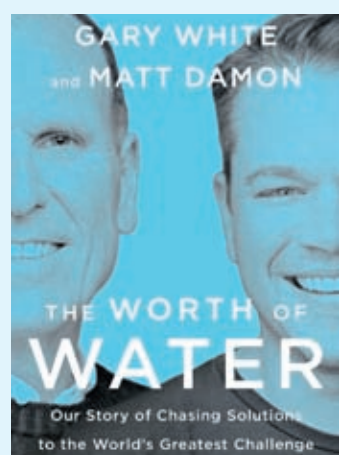
After a brief honeymoon period in which Maurizio gets to play poor and work at her family's truck company, an opportunity back in opens when Aldo invites the newlyweds to his birthday. Maurizio emerges from the opulent proceedings even more convinced that the simple life is for him, but Patrizia is not about to let this precious window evaporate. And soon they're both in deep.

But this isn't just about a

reluctant heir and his ambitious wife pushing him toward his destiny. This film pokes a hole in the very concept of mass luxury and its central artifice. At the time, before "Dom and Tom" took over, Gucci was in a bit of a crisis, with Rodolfo being perhaps overly precious about expansion, Aldo a little too obsessed with profits and expansion and the "brand" in jeopardy of being devalued with fakes and oversaturation. These cracks in the veneer help Patrizia and Maurizio wrestle power for themselves, until he decides he'd rather go at it on his own. At that point, it really is the beginning of the end. "House of Gucci" presents a fascinating and insane story that just keeps getting more unbelievable.

It was a big, glamorous mess and deserves a big, glamorously messy movie, right down to the performances and all-over-the-place accents. But if the idea of watching Leto and Pacino chew the scenery together sounds unappealing, this movie might not be for you. Everyone is going for broke here.

And in spite of the absurdity, it is stupidly watchable. If you don't know or remember the details of what went down, save the search for after. Just wear your gaudiest designer logo, order a martini at the bar and give in to the easy pleasures of "House of Gucci." □



This image shows cover art for the book "The Worth of Water: Our Story of Chasing Solutions to the World's Greatest Challenge" by Gary White and Matt Damon.

**Associated Press**

## Matt Damon co-writing a book on access to clean water

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Matt Damon has some big-name endorsers for a book he has out March 1 about access to safe water. Former President Bill Clinton and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Muhammad Yunus are among those providing blurbs for "The Worth of Water," which the Oscar-winning actor and filmmaker worked on with civil and environmental engineer Gary White. Damon has been a prominent spokesman for

water sanitation since visiting Zambia in 2006, and with White founded the nonprofits Water.org and WaterEquity.

Damon and White met at a Clinton Global Initiative gathering in 2008.

"We're excited to have written this book together, and we can't wait to share the story of what happens when a movie actor and a civil engineer team up to try and take on the global water crisis — the stumbles

and obstacles, the breakthroughs and big gains, and the incredible people we met along the way," Damon and White said in a statement Tuesday.

"Our journey has proved two things: one, solving the water crisis is possible — within our lifetimes. And two, the key is unleashing the incredible determination and resourcefulness of the people who are fighting every day for essentials like safe water and sanita-

tion."

According to the book's publisher, the Penguin Random House imprint Portfolio, "The Worth of Water" will illuminate "the challenges of building and scaling market-based financial solutions to make clean water and sanitation more accessible. And ultimately, it's the story of how communities and individuals can be empowered to make long-lasting investments in their own well-being." □



# LeBron suspended 1 game, Stewart 2 games for altercation

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
**AP Basketball Writer**

LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers has been suspended for one game and Detroit's Isaiah Stewart was suspended two games for their roles in an ugly incident during Sunday's Lakers-Pistons game.

The NBA announced the suspensions Monday, and both will affect games on Tuesday. James will not play when the Lakers visit Madison Square Garden to play the New York Knicks. Stewart will miss the Pistons' home game against Miami on Tuesday and their game Wednesday at Milwaukee. James will forfeit about \$284,000 in salary, while Stewart will lose about \$45,000. It is the first suspension in the 19-year career of James, who has won four NBA titles with three teams. The Lakers and Pistons meet again Sunday in Los Angeles, and James and Stewart will both be eligible to play. Stewart, the NBA said, was disciplined for "escalating an on-court altercation by repeatedly and aggressively pursuing ... James in an unsportsmanlike manner." James merited the suspension "for recklessly hitting Stewart in the face and initiating an on-court



**Detroit Pistons center Isaiah Stewart (28) is held back after a foul during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2021, in Detroit.**

**Associated Press**

altercation," the NBA said. The incident happened in the third quarter, starting when James and Stewart were jostling for position during a free throw. Their arms appeared to get intertwined and James swung his elbow, making contact with Stewart, who quickly had blood streaming from above his eye. James, it appeared, attempted to defuse the situation after realizing he'd made contact with Stewart

and drawn blood. It didn't take long for most of the players from both teams — along with the referees, coaches and security personnel — to join the fray and try to keep James and Stewart separated. Within 25 seconds of the contact being made by James, there were at least 25 people on the floor. Referee Phenizee Ransom attached himself to James. Cooler heads seemed to prevail, for a moment. Stewart

was guided away from the spot where the contact occurred by teammates and coaches, though he appeared to become more incensed along the way. He then tried to double back — on multiple occasions — and run toward James. A number of people again blocked his path and made sure the incident didn't get uglier. Pistons coach Dwane Casey said Stewart needed eight stitches to close

the wound, adding that he did not think what Stewart did in reaction to the play merited a suspension. "His eye got cracked all the way open. He was upset for a reason," Casey said. Stewart eventually left the floor, seeming to sprint again as he did so, and there was concern that he would try to head back toward the floor through another entry tunnel. Pistons guard Cory Joseph even headed toward that tunnel, just in case — and with the blessing of referee Scott Foster, the game's crew chief. "After Isaiah Stewart left the court, Cory was anticipating he may come around the back of (the) house and enter the Laker bench from the opposite side," Foster told a pool reporter after the game. "So, he was going to intercept him. I actually told Cory that would be good." Stewart was assessed two technical fouls, James was assessed a Flagrant Foul Penalty 2, and both players were ejected. James has been sanctioned multiple times by the league in the past, receiving fines for everything from flopping, skipping news conferences and kicking a water bottle. □

# New York Giants fire offensive coordinator Jason Garrett

By **TOM CANAVAN**  
**EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)**

— The New York Giants have fired offensive coordinator Jason Garrett after a dreadful performance in a nationally televised game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Giants (3-7) tweeted the decision Tuesday afternoon, saying the former Dallas Cowboys head coach had been relieved of his duties. There was no immediate word who would replace Garrett for the game Sunday at MetLife Stadium against the Philadelphia Eagles (5-6). Former Cleveland Browns coach Freddie Kitchens is on the staff and could take over. Garrett was hired last year

shortly after Joe Judge was named head coach. The Giants (3-7) were embarrassed on Monday night, dropping a 30-10 decision to the Bucs. Judge said the team has too many good players not to be scoring, giving an indication changes were coming. New York has scored 189 points this season. It has struggled in the red zone and in five of its seven losses has a combined 65 points. The Giants finished with 215 total yards Monday night, the second-lowest total of the 26-game Judge era. They gained 159 yards in a loss to Arizona on Dec. 13, 2020. Only one of the Giants' 54 offensive plays gained more than 16 yards

against Tampa Bay. The Giants' 15 first downs were a season low and their fewest since they had 14 against Cleveland last Dec. 20. They have 31 first downs in their last two games, including 16 in the victory against Las Vegas on Nov. 7. New York rushed for 66 yards, its second-lowest total of the season; the Giants ran for 60 yards in their season-opening loss to Denver. New York's 24:21 time of possession was a season low. The offense has been devastated by injuries, particularly on the line. Center Nick Gates (broken leg) and left guard Shane Lemieux (knee) played two and one game, respec-




**New York Giants offensive coordinator Jason Garrett watches players warm up before an NFL football game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Monday, Nov. 22, 2021, in Tampa, Fla.**

**Associated Press**

tively. Standout left tackle Andrew Thomas has missed games with foot and ankle injuries, and guard Will Hernandez and tackle Nate Solder are playing on the

right this season, a new side for them. It's led to breakdowns and forced quarterback Daniel Jones to run a lot more than he would want. □





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## On College Football: What is the value of a rivalry game?

By **RALPH D. RUSSO** AP College Football Writer

Being an Army football fan is a little like living in time capsule.

Home games kickoff at noon at Michie Stadium. The Black Knights will be running an offense that was groundbreaking in 1970. They have no conference affiliation, and no matter what happens throughout the season, success or failure will be defined by the result of the rivalry game against Navy.

"It's just exactly like it was in 1972," said Mark Beech, who is a West Point graduate, the son of a West Point graduate and author of "When Saturday Mattered Most: The Last Golden Season of Army Football."

The evolution of college football has gone into overdrive the past three decades, both on the field and off. What was once a regional sport has gone national. The powerhouse programs have nearly all consolidated in various conferences, often with little regard for geography or tradition.

The great debate was once, "Who's No. 1?" Now



**Army wide receiver Camden Harrison (88) is pulled down by Navy safety Kevin Brennan (10) Perry during the first half of an NCAA college football game, Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019, in Philadelphia.**

**Associated Press**

it's, "Eight-team playoff or 12?"

"The regular season to me was what college football was all about," Beech said. "And the rivalries were the showcase events of the regular season."

The rivalry game is in many ways the purest form of college football. A game with built-in stakes regardless of circumstances. But rivalry

games that used to be — should be — destinations unto themselves now feel like just another step on the road to a greater goal.

Take the two best college football rivalries, according to a new survey of writers and sportscasters taken by The Associated Press.

On Saturday, No. 3 Alabama faces Auburn in the Iron Bowl and No. 2 Ohio

State visits No. 6 Michigan in the 117th edition of The Game.

Even with a loss, the Crimson Tide will play the following Saturday against No. 1 Georgia for the Southeastern Conference title and a chance to go to the College Football Playoff.

The winner of Buckeyes-Wolverines moves on to the Big Ten title game. Win that,

too, and it's on to the play-off. Sure, there are plenty of rivalry games that will be played over the Thanksgiving weekend that have only modest stakes attached beyond bragging rights. Still, the fact that this has now been branded Rivalry Week makes the whole thing feel less organic.

Has modern college football diminished the importance of rivalry games?

ESPN's Kirk Herbstreit, a former Buckeyes quarterback, doesn't think so.

"USC-UCLA is a great example," he said. "You have to be maybe a little bit older because that game's been off the radar, but those teams get on the field together, there's still people that think back to when that game decided everything." Herbstreit's son, Zak, is a walk-on at Ohio State and is plenty familiar with the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry. Still, Kirk Herbstreit said his son only now is getting a true taste of the intensity.

"He texted me last night, this was a Sunday night, and his text was: 'Man, do I have a whole new appreciation for this rivalry,'" he said. □



**San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey talks during a news conference announcing his retirement from baseball, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021, in San Francisco.**

**Associated Press**

## Giants' Posey, O's Mancini win Comeback Players of the Year

**NEW YORK (AP)** — San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey and Baltimore Orioles slugger Trey Mancini were named baseball's Comeback Player of the Year Award winners on Monday night.

Posey, the National League winner, sat out the 2020 season after twin girls adopted by him and his wife were born prematurely. He announced this month he was retiring

after 12 seasons. Mancini, who took the American League prize, missed the entire 2020 season while being treated for stage 3 colon cancer. They were selected in balloting by the 30 team beat reporters at MLB.com. The 34-year-old Posey hit .304 with 18 home runs, 56 RBIs and an .889 OPS for the 107-win Giants. The batting average was his highest since 2017 and the homer total

his best since 2015. Mancini, 29, batted .255 with 21 homers, 71 RBIs and a .758 OPS as a first baseman and designated hitter for Baltimore. He hit his 100th career home run against Toronto on June 20th in his 531st career game, becoming the fastest Oriole to reach the mark after debuting with the team. He was runner-up to the Mets' Pete Alonso at the All-Star Home Run Derby. □